

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6213

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E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, UK, ET

SUBJECT: BRITISH VIEW OF CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS IN ETHIO-
PIA

1. WHEN EMBOFF AND AF/S COUNTRY DIRECTOR O'NEILL MET WITH ASSISTANT UNDER SECRETARY AT FCO, NORMAN ASPIN, ON DECEMBER 2, THEY ASKED ABOUT BRITISH VIEW OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN ETHIOPIA. ASPIN'S INTERPRETATION COINCIDED WITH REPORTS AND ANALYSIS FROM EMBASSY ADDIS. HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT BRITISH BELIEVE BRIGADIER TEFARI BENTA WILL BE MORE OF A FIGUREHEAD THAN AMIN AND CAN BE EXPECTED TO FOLLOW THE WISHES OF THE DIRG. BRITISH ALSO BELIEVE THAT CHANCES OF PRISONERS SURVIVING HAVE BEEN CONSIDERABLY INCREASED AS A RESULT OF PRESSURES FROM WORLD LEADERS. BRITISH HAVE REPORT THAT THIRD DIVISION AND AIR FORCE HAVE NOT YET ACCEPTED CHANGES AND AIR FORCE IS PARTICULARLY APPREHENSIVE OF TENSIONS CONCERNING ERETRIA.

2. WHEN ASKED ABOUT BRITISH VIEW OF MAJOR MENGISTU HAILE MARIAM, ASPIN SAID THAT HE IS FAR LEFT, ANTI-US AND ANTI-BRITISH, AND STRONGLY FAVORS PROCUREMENT OF ARMS FROM USSR.

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SPIERS

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